

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6200

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 KUALA LUMPUR 0900

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS-DECLASSIFY DEC 31, 1978

TAGS: MARR, ASEAN, RP

SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

1. WITH BASE NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY IN SUSPENSE, I
SHOULD LIKE TO RAISE FOR EXAMINATION THE APPARENTLY ACCEPTED
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AND UNQUESTIONED PREMISE THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE
UNITED STATES TO MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY BASES IN THE
PHILIPPINES, AND THAT WE SHOULD BE READY TO PAY THE
PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT VERY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS IN MILITARY
AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR PERMISSION TO DO SO.

2. THIS SEEMS TO ME A LEGITIMATE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE

WHICH AFFECTS NOT ONLY OUR RELATIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINES, BUT ALSO WITH ITS ASEAN PARTNERS AND THE REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT IS A QUESTION THAT SHOULD BE ARGUED, AND THE NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING BASES SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS OBVIOUS AND SELF-MANIFEST. THOSE THAT SUPPORT A BASE AGREEMENT SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO STATE AND DEFEND THEIR CASE, AS OF COURSE SHOULD THOSE WHO QUESTION THE NEED FOR THIS KIND OF PRESENCE.

3. THIS TELEGRAM IS CLASSIFIED BECAUSE IT IS DESIRABLE TO KEEP PERSONALITIES AND ARGUMENTS SEPARATE, BUT THERE IS NOTHING IN THE DISCUSSION ITSELF THAT CANNOT BE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. SCRUTINY OF THE ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON BY THE CONGRESS, THE PRESS, AND THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING APPROACH ADVOCATED BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. THERE ARE NO ARGUMENTS ON EITHER SIDE THAT AN INTELLIGENT FILIPINO, (OR AN INTELLIGENT RUSSIAN OR CHINESE) COULD NO ADDUCE FOR HIMSELF. AWARENESS OF THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR DISCUSSION COULD HELP THE PHILIPPINES (AND ITS ASEAN PARTNERS) IN CONSIDERING, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, THE DESIRABILITY OF CONTINUING AN AMERICAN BASE PRESENCE.

4. FOLLOWING ARE THE ARGUMENTS USUALLY ADVANCED FOR MAINTAINING THE BASES:

A. THEY ARE NECESSARY IF WE WISH TO PROJECT OUR MILITARY POWER ON THE MAINLAND OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ITS NEIGHBORING WATERS;

B. THEY ARE A POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY STABILIZING CONFIDENTIAL

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FACTOR IN THE AREA, AND DEMONSTRATE THE SINCERITY OF OUR COMMITMENT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA;

C. THEY SERVE AS A DETERRENT TO USSR AND PRC ADVENTURISM.

D. THEY ARE ELEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL, STRATEGIC POWER BALANCE;

E. THE USSR AND THE PRC ARE QUITE PREPARED TO SEE THEM REMAIN, EACH FOR ITS OWN REASONS.

5. THE "PROJECTION OF MILITARY POWER ARGUMENT" IS VALID IF YOU ACCEPT THE PREMISE THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST HAVE THIS CAPACITY. OUR BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES UNQUESTIONABLY PROVIDE THE ESSENTIAL FULCRUM FOR THE EXERCISE OF MILITARY LEVERAGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BEYOND THE PHILIPPINES. (STUDIES DONE IN 1969 DEMONSTRATED THE ASTRONOMICAL DIFFERENCES IN COST IN MAINTAINING A CARRIER TASK FORCE OFF THE COAST OF VIETNAM WITHOUT THE FACILITIES FURNISHED BY SUBIC. CLARK FIELD WAS SHOWN TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS VITAL.) WE MUST ASK OURSELVES, HOWEVER, WHETHER WE NEED THE CAPACITY TO

PROJECT THIS LEVEL OF MILITARY POWER IN THE REGION TODAY.
I THINK THAT THE ANSWER IS THAT WE DO NOT. THE NATIONS
OF SOUTHEAST ASIA ARE NOT THREATENED BY A CONVENTIONAL
ATTACK, BUT BY INTERNAL SUBVERSION AND INSURGENCY. OUR
EXPERIENCE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES HAS SHOWN THE
SEVERE LIMITATIONS OF OUR CAPACITY TO INTERVENE
SUCCESSFULLY IN SUCH CONFLICTS. THE BASES ARE NOT
MILITARILY RELEVANT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA NEEDS.

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6. PERHAPS TRUE, FOR THE TIME BEING, RUNS THE COUNTER
ARGUMENT,-- BUT THE BASES MIGHT BE NECESSARY SOME DAY.
ACCEPTED, BUT DO WE NEED TO FURNISH A LIVE-IN FIREMAN AND
PAY A HANDSOME BOARD-AND-ROOM FEE TO THE HOUSEHOLDER ON
THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE HOUSE MAY SOME DAY CATCH FIRE?

CANNOT THE FIREMAN RETURN TO THE FIREHOUSE AND WAIT
UNTIL HE IS CALLED? THE BASE FACILITIES WILL REMAIN, AS
SIMILAR FACILITIES REMAINED IN SINGAPORE AFTER THE
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DEPARTURE OF THE BRITISH. LIKE SINGAPORE, THERE IS NO
REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR
OUR USE AT THE LEVEL OF MILITARY PRESENCE THAT THE PHILIPPINES
AND ITS ASEAN PARTNERS WOULD CONSIDER APPROPRIATE.

7. "THE PROJECTION OF POWER" ARGUMENT CONTAINS ANOTHER
IMPORTANT FLAW. THE CENTRAL RATIONALE FOR A MILITARY
BASE IS THAT IT PERMITS A COUNTRY TO MAINTAIN AND EXERCISE
WITHOUT RESTRAINT MILITARY FORCE FROM AN AREA BEYOND ITS
SHORE. THIS POWER IS ALREADY LIMITED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS
AND WILL BE FURTHER RESTRICTED BY THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT
IN ANY AGREEMENT LIKELY TO COME FROM CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS.
BEFORE THE FIREMAN CAN MOVE HE NEEDS TWO CHOPS AGREEING
THAT IT IS THE RIGHT KIND OF FIRE. THE WHOLE IDEA OF THE
BASE IS THAT YOU CAN USE IT WITHOUT RESTRICTION IN TIMES
OF EMERGENCY. WHY PAY A HIGH PRICE TO MAINTAIN A CAPACITY
YOU CAN'T EXERCISE.

8. SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS DEVELOPED IN THE PAST TWO DECADES
BEYOND THE POINT WHERE WE NEED TO ASSUME A UNILATERAL
POSITION OF GUARANTOR OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND
POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE. ASEAN, WHILE STILL IN THE
DEVELOPING STAGE, IS HELPING TO CREATE A SENSE OF
REGIONAL COHESION. IF AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE OUR
FRIENDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SHOULD FEEL THEMSELVES
THREATENED BY EITHER A REGIONAL OR OUTSIDE POWER, AND
SHOULD SEEK OUR ASSISTANCE, THE USE OF MILITARY FACILITIES
IN THEIR TERRITORIES WOULD BE ASSUMED WITHOUT QUESTION IN
ANY RESPONSE WE MIGHT CHOOSE TO MAKE.

9. THE BASES AS A STABILIZING FACTOR AND EVIDENCE OF
COMMITMENT. THE NATIONS OF SEA ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE
ROLE THE U.S. INTENDS TO PLAY IN THE AREA. THEY NEED OUR
MARKETS, OUR CAPITAL, OUR TECHNOLOGY, OUR MANAGEMENT
TECHNIQUES, OUR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES, AND THERE ARE
AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES IN THESE FIELDS TO SHOW OUR CONCERN
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FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THEY
REFUSE TO DEFINE IT PRECISELY, BUT THEY ALSO SEE A
CONTINUING POLITICO-MILITARY ROLE FOR THE U.S. IN

SOUTHEAST ASIA. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES FIND LITTLE RELEVANCE OF THE BASES TO THEIR SECURITY. SOME TALK TO US IN PRIVATE ABOUT OUR SECURITY ROLE, BUT THEY ARE ON PUBLIC RECORD IN AN ASEAN DECLARATION THAT FOREIGN BASES SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE AREA AND A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY ESTABLISHED. MARCOS HAS SAID THAT THE BASES HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON PHILIPPINE SECURITY IN THAT THEY COULD ATTRACT AN OUTSIDE ATTACK. THE PHILIPPINES, HE MAINTAINS, MIGHT BE DRAWN INTO A CONFLICT AGAINST ITS INTERESTS. (SO MUCH, INCIDENTALLY, FOR THE CONCEPT OF MUTUAL SECURITY.)

10. SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE HAS MADE STRONG STATEMENTS ABOUT THE NEED FOR AN AMERICAN PRESENCE, BUT HE HAS NOT PUBLICLY ENDORSED THE BASES, NOR HAS HE, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, TOLD MARCOS THAT SINGAPORE HAS A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

11. INDONESIA, WITH SINGAPORE, THE MOST VOCAL IN REMINDING THE U.S. OF OUR OBLIGATIONS, SEES THE BASES AS A "BILATERAL MATTER" BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINES. GENERAL MURDANI, A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED AND INTELLIGENT MAN, WHO IN THREE YEARS AS HIS COUNTRY'S REPRESENTATIVE IN SEOUL, HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE AT CLOSE HAND AN AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE, RECENTLY ASKED UNDER SECRETARY HABIB WHAT WE NEEDED THE BASES FOR. THE INDONESIANS ARE PROBABLY CONCERNED THAT \$200 MILLION A YEAR IN BASE RENTAL WOULD MEAN LESS MAP FOR THEM.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 4 KUALA LUMPUR 0900

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

12. IN SUMMARY, THE PHILIPPINES ASEAN PARTNERS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE US AROUND MILITARILY AS A RESIDUAL INSURANCE POLICY, BUT ARE NOT PREPARED TO SHARE WITH MARCOS THE POLITICAL COSTS OF PERMITTING THE BASES TO REMAIN.

13. THE BASES AS A DETERRENT TO COMMUNIST ADVENTURISM. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE PRC INCLINATION TOWARDS ADVENTURISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS LOW. THE RUSSIANS
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MAY BE A DIFFERENT MATTER, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT KIND OF SOVIET ACTIONS THE BASES MIGHT DETER. THE BASES DID NOT DETER THE NORTH VIETNAMESE IN THE PAST. WHY SHOULD THEY INHIBIT THE SRV NOW?

14. THE BASES IN THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC POWER BALANCE. THIS ARGUMENT SUGGESTS THAT WE MIGHT HAVE AN INTEREST IN THEM BEYOND THE ROLE THAT THEY MIGHT PLAY IN THE DEFENSE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THIS INTEREST IS NOT APPARENT TO ME. THE BASES WOULD APPEAR TO WEIGH VERY marginally IN MAINTAINING THE STRATEGIC EQUILIBRIUM WITH THE USSR AND THE PRC, AND TO BE REMOTE FROM THE AREAS OF VITAL CONCERN TO US,

15. THIS ARGUMENT IS LINKED TO THE NEXT THAT THE RUSSIANS AND CHINESE ARE QUITE PREPARED TO SEE THE BASES REMAIN. IF THEY SAW THE BASES AS A U.S. ASSET IN A CONTEST FOR INFLUENCE, THEY COULD HARDLY ACCEPT THEIR CONTINUANCE. WHY THEN DO THEY TAKE THIS POSITION? ONE EXPLANATION IS THAT IN THEIR OWN RIVALRY, EACH WOULD PREFER U.S. "INFLUENCE" TO THAT OF THEIR COMMUNIST RIVAL. BUT THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE THAT THE PHILIPPINES WOULD LEAN SUFFICIENTLY TOWARDS EITHER TO SIGNIFICANTLY DESTABILIZE THE USSR-PRC BALANCE.

16. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NEITHER THE PRC NOR USSR SEE THEIR INTERESTS SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY OUR PRESENCE, AND THAT BOTH FEEL THAT THE BASES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR CONCEPTION OF US AS A CAPITALIST POWER, AND HELP THEM PORTRAY US AS COLONIALIST AND IMPERIALIST TO THE THIRD WORLD. THEY MAY BELIEVE ALSO THAT THE BASES WILL INTENSIFY THE CONTRADICTIONS IN U.S.-PHILIPPINES POST-COLONIAL RELATIONS, STRENGTHEN CLASS STRUGGLE, AND HASTEN THE DAY OF A REVOLUTIONARY MOVE TOWARD SOCIALISM. IN ANY CASE TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE THE RUSSIANS AND THE CHINESE WOULD LIKE US TO OR DON'T OBJECT TO SEEMS A DUBIOUS RATIONALE.

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17. MARCOS HAS ALREADY SAID THAT ONE BILLION IN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID OVER FIVE YEARS ISN'T ENOUGH, AND I ASSUME THAT THERE ARE OTHER PRICE TAGS IN THE FORM OF JURISDICTION AND CONTROL STILL NOT SETTLED. WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER OTHER INDIRECT COSTS OF A MILITARY BASE PRESENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES. OUR RELATIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINES CAN NEVER BE NORMAL WHILE OUR BASES REMAIN. FOR THE FILIPINOS THEY CREATE CONTRADICTIONS AND STRAINS WHICH TWIST AND WARP EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD US. ON THE ONE HAND THE BASES SYMBOLIZE THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH US, THEY ARE VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF OUR CONTINUING NEED FOR THE PHILIPPINES, AND BECOME THEREBY A HOSTAGE FOR ATTENTION AND FAVORS AND A HOLECARD IN ALL THEIR DEALINGS WITH US. THEY WOULD FEEL LOST WITHOUT THIS LEVERAGE. ON THE OTHER HAND THE BASES ARE ALSO REGARDED AS AN AFFRONT TO PHILIPPINE NATIONAL PRIDE, AND A SYMBOL OF IMPERFECT INDEPENDENCE AND CONTINUING DEPENDENCY. THE FILIPINOS HAVE LONG SINCE PERSUADED THEMSELVES THAT THE BASES SERVE ONLY U.S. INTERESTS AND THAT THEIR GENEROUS ACCEPTANCE OF A SERIOUS ABRIDGMENT OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY HAS BEEN INADEQUATELY RECOGNIZED AND SHABBILY REWARDED. IN THE THIRD WORLD CIRCLES THEY YEARN TO JOIN, THE FILIPINOS ARE CONDEMNED AND OSTRACIZED BECAUSE OF THE BASES, AND THE SOLATIUM THEY NOW SEEK THEY SEE AS MODEST COMPENSATION FOR THE OBLOQUY THEY SUFFER ON OUR ACCOUNT. MANUEL QUEZON ONCE SAID "BETTER A COUNTRY RULED LIKE HELL BY FILIPINOS THAN ONE RULED LIKE HEAVEN BY AMERICANS." WHILE CLARK AND ANGLES, SUBIC AND OLONGAPO ARE THE JEKYLL-HYDE SIDES OF THE SAME COIN, FOR THE FILIPINO THEY PUT THE HEAVEN AND HELL IN STARK, IMMEDIATE, CONFIDENCE-DESTROYING CONTRAST. THE BASE RELATIONSHIP ALSO HELPS TO PERPETUATE IN THE PHILIPPINES A NEUROTIC, MANIPULATIVE, PSYCHICALLY CRIPPLING FORM OF DEPENDENCY. AS A CONSEQUENCE IT IS A COUNTRY THAT IS DIFFICULT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY. WE ACKNOWLEDGE PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE, BUT WE STILL THINK

OF BASES EXTRATERRITORIALLY. MESSAGES STILL MOVE IN OUR
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COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS ADDRESSED TO "CLARK FIELD, P.I.,"
THE P.I. STANDING FOR PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, A GEOGRAPHIC
NAME AS OBSOLETE AS "BATAVIA, NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES".
PERHAPS MOST INDICATIVE OF THIS ANOMALOUS RELATIONSHIP
IS THAT 32 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE WE ARE STILL RECRUITING
INTO OUR NAVY (AND THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT IS STILL
PERMITTING US TO ENLIST) PHILIPPINE CITIZENS WHO MUST
ENTER OUR SERVICE AS SERVANTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 4 OF 4 KUALA LUMPUR 0900

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

18. IN THE MEMORY OF VIRTUALLY ALL LIVING MEN, THERE HAVE "ALWAYS" BEEN AMERICAN BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND THIS PRESENCE SEEMS TO US NORMAL AND NATURAL. TO ANY VISITOR TO CLARK OR SUBIC THEY SEEM MORE PERMANENT AND MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN THE TAWDRY, JERRY-BUILT FILIPINO COMMUNITIES THAT LIE BESIDE THEM. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT A BASE SITUATION IS ABNORMAL AND INHERENTLY UNSTABLE BECAUSE THE RECEIVING STATE MUST ACCEPT THE PRESENCE WITHIN ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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BOUNDARIES OF THE SUPREME SYMBOL OF A FOREIGN SOVEREIGNTY,-- ITS COERCIVE INSTRUMENTS. THE PRESENCE MUST BE ESSENTIALLY EXTRATERRITORIAL IN THAT THE SENDING STATE CANNOT ACCEPT TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE HOST COUNTRY JURISDICTION OVER ITS TROOPS. THIS SITUATION IS ACCEPTABLE ONLY IF THE TWO STATES SHARE A COMMON PERCEPTION OF AN IMMINENT MILITARY THREAT. IT IS MORE TOLERABLE IF THE TWO STATES ARE OF THE SAME RACIAL STOCK, HAVE COMMON CULTURAL ROOTS, AND ROUGHLY SIMILAR STANDARDS OF LIVING. THESE CONDITIONS DO NOT EXIST IN OUR PHILIPPINE BASE RELATIONSHIP, AND THE INHERENT FRICTIONS IN THE SITUATION ARE INTENSIFIED BECAUSE WE WERE THE FORMER COLONIAL MASTER.

19. CONSIDERING ALL OF THE FOREGOING ARGUMENTS, I REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BENEFITS WHICH WE DERIVE FROM THE BASES,--BENEFITS WHICH I SEE AS STEADILY ERODING-- DO NOT WARRANT THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL COSTS OF MAINTAINING THEM. SOUTHEAST ASIA IS AN AREA OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS HERE, BUT THEY DO NOT FACE A THREAT THAT WOULD JUSTIFY, IN THE FACE OF GOP DEMANDS AND ASEAN INDIFFERENCE, THE LEVEL AND KIND OF A MILITARY PRESENCE REPRESENTED IN CLARK AND SUBIC. THE CHOICE IS NOT HOWEVER BETWEEN THE FULL BASE FACILITIES WE HAVE NOW AND NO FACILITIES AT ALL. WITH THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY AND CONTROL FINALLY RESOLVED, THE GOP WOULD PROBABLY BE AS DELIGHTED AS SINGAPORE IS TO PROVIDE US WITH BASE FACILITIES WHEN WE NEED THEM, FOR A FEE. IT WOULD PROBABLY ALSO ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF SMALL U.S. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR TEAMS ON A PERMANENT BASIS. RATHER THAN NEGOTIATING TO REMAIN, WE SHOULD BE NEGOTIATING FOR AN ORDERLY AND GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL THAT WOULD MAINTAIN THE PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND RESERVOIR OF TRAINED MANPOWER AND MINIMIZE THE SEVERE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHIC CONSEQUENCES OF OUR DEPARTURE. UNDERHILL

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